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1984

Sing While You May: An Intro to the Legendary Pink Dots

Painfully symbolic, macabre, and of course, surreal are some of the words that come to mind when one takes an overview of the L.P.D.s work. The L.P.D.s are guaranteed to evoke subconscious and unconscious feelings of awe and wonder not to mention waves of psychic distress. We will now take a brief look at the various stages of development the L.P.D.s have taken through the years.

First Period: The first cassette releases "Chemical Playground" (unavailable in original form, some of the tracks can be found on the Flowmotion tape "Promotion") "Atomic Roses" show a group of young men obsessed with lunacy, cruelty, and problems with society in general. "He came back with a file and slowly sawed my legs off" A story of a murderous tyke who is capable of great cruelty in "Odd-side one on "Promotion" "I never really understood why he picked on me, I'm just angry with funny eyes" sings Ed Ka-Spel who can be credited with masking his lyrics with a nonchalant, vocal demeanor that allows the listener to dream while cringing. On "Promotion" we hear lots of grating, eloquent guitar, mucho backwards vocals, backtapes of crowds, political leaders, and other things, and even a spot or two of real drums, a rarity for a band that usually relies on drum boxes.

"Atomic Roses" shows the Dots on a quirky outing through the backwaters of the brain. There's less guitar, lots of vocoder, stange backbeats showing the Dots at their experimental best. Some good tracks are "Closely King" (Also available on a compilation listed in the audio bibliography) "Spiritus" and "Atomic Roses".

Mid Period: The Dots are ever prolific as they release "Basilisk" a 60 minute cassette released by Third Mind, "The Curse", the first lp available to the public, a tape sequel to The Curse (awaiting further information on this one), and another cassette release "Kleine Krieger" (this one comes in a model airplane kit, I regret that I didn't have time to review this one).

The mid period sound shows the group maturing but as always experimenting with new ideas. Ed Ka-Spel in particular exhibits a new deeper vocal range while retaining it's high, whiny, range. "Basilisk" is a keyboard dominated cassette while "Kleine Krieger" has a good deal of guitar similar to that found on "Promotion" while "The Curse" is kind of a mixture of the two.

"The Curse" contains the story of "Lisa's Party" whose host "serves a delicate mint pie" (laced with cyanide). The bohemian guests who include an aging film star and a naked lady in a cage drop dead after eating the pie redolent of almond.

"Swastikas shout out from walls, they're tattooed on a million fists, clenched together, safe in numbers, waving from the precipices" These are lyrics from "Alphabetic Night" a look at the potential fascist threat in many different areas of society. "Another place a different story, fingers play on stale cigars, business creeps, the warehouse leaks, the chairman sold his daughter's car, sharpening knives and cutting when the time is right" The private sector goes bankrupt and enters us the difference with the public's hide. This theme is explored in great depth on the new L.P.D. record, "The Tower".

Also from the same time period (perhaps a little later), a track from the "Elephant Table Album" (a compilation lp to which the Dots contributed one track) called "Surprise, Surprise".

This song neatly encapsulates the mid period sound yet another Ka-Spel description of party gone bad. -over-

At this meeting of heads of state and other representatives of the ruling class held in honor of the centenary of the crumbling British Ruling Class, there's not only cake but an apparently unnoticed present that goes tick-tick-tick in the course of the evening. When the time to open the presents comes Captains friend Lita pulled the yellow ribbon on the fateful package and "blew them all to hell" thus ending the party on typically morbid note. While the subject matter of this is unashamedly dark it is a far cry from such international cassette scene contemporaries as Whitehouse, S.P.K., New Bloodsuckers or any of the other industrial open head surgery luminaries.

Recent Works: The ever prolific L.P.D.s have thus far in 1984 released "The Tower" a concept lp based on the demise and resultant fascist seizure of power in 1989. "Face of the Fire" a six-song ep full of lyrics that surpass much recent poetry. Both lps represent the new Dot's sound which in some ways is a departure from the past in that there are no longer long washes of electronic space or songs without vocals. A new found sense of forceful articulation plus an amazingly clean studio sound make the new sound fresh and more appropriate for this year, 1984 a year of fear and confusion across the globe.

Notes on the Tower

"Faces at the window, fingers clutched at the bars, a fly skips from an eyebrow to an elbow to a snout" a depiction of some of the current unfortunate imprisoned in the tower, command post of Britain's new military regime. People are executed for political reasons and there are "rusty chains and armoured pillows stuffed with steel pins".

We have in "Vigil-Anti" an English parallel to our own Klan conflicts in the south. A household of "undesirables" has been targeted by the local brownshirts for removal for reasons of morality and purity. Violent death was promised "if they put up a fight" the almost classical thrust of Patrick Pagninis violin brings a big dose sadness to this piece.

"Poppy Day" is the most haunting piece on the lp. We feel the awful desperation of the populace as they become so much electric sheep in the hands of the all powerful state. Ignorance is Bliss, War is Peace. The people go collectively insane, "we'll remember when that wreath of flowers is a crown of thorns to drape around your helmet".

On side two we hear "in the courtyard shuffle deviants with goldstars they're scarred with numbers" The curtains have been drawn as the military devils move to silence the opposition. "Population's getting down and we're great again, we're great we're great again" the voice growls on and on as we are reminded of our own great leader telling us that America is respected again by her enemies. The air grows darker yet as we hear "the echo of a thousand marching boots, hammers on the air, they're singing anthems as Salome lifts her skirt cause they're real men, happy, healthy" "How the military conveys are rattling down the streets as total control is enforced on a terrified populace. It's time to keep Britain free of undesirables, keep it pure, keep it white" And so it will be in 1989 according to these young men. The lp closes out with a doomy voice telling us that "The Golden Age lies around the corner, any day now". America must not be so very different in the long run.

"Face of the Fire"

This mini lp features "Slaso" the story of the man-machine who according to the woman in the story (played by Ignit of Holland) can be "magic as man mean as a machine". There's lots of fairly loud guitar throughout the disc and the keyboards have taken on a more supportive, rhythmic role than in the past. "Neon Gladiator" starts with neat backtapes of an evangelist raving about the end of the world, the anti-christ, etc. The Dot's roll into yet another ribald tale of a party at the end of civilization, "So far the carpet's wall to wall they're splashing in the pool, they fornicate in corners, they're moaning in the haze" "Lilly swung a knife the statues came to life, the stone swords crunching into heads the carpet turning red they're Neon Gladiators sparring sparring on the lawn" This party as usual seems to be full of certain elements that I suspect the authors find useless and worthy of redemption by fire. These people do not really have all that much "fun" at these gruesome gatherings. "Your hand was freezing so I slipped it in my pocket strolled along the keyhole looking at the sky for the dancing rockets" This is "Eight Minutes to Live" a pretty, surreal description of a walk at night, a thoughtful, introspective way to finish off a collection of songs that show the Dot's at their imaginative peak for this year of 1984.

So to some this piece up I would like to make it clear that this has been the very briefest of an overview of the L.P.D.s that I could give in 23 pages. The Dot's have many, many threads in their fine tapestry of music and I would recommend to any interesting parties that you that you check out the audio bibliography at the end of this article. Also the Dot's themselves enjoy correspondence and will more than likely write back to you... Sing While You May... Sing While You May....

CASSETTES AND LPs "Brighter New" First lp

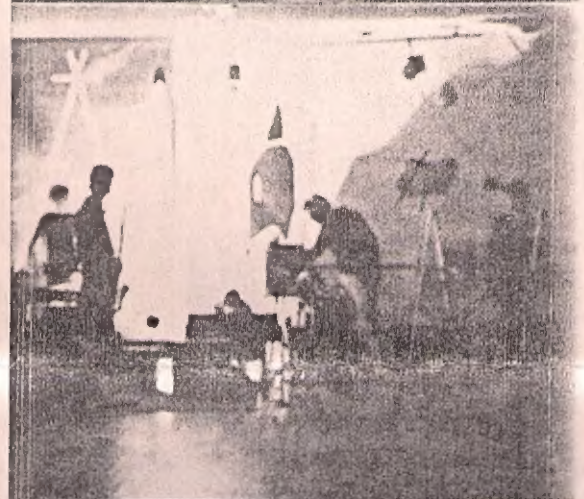
"ONLY DREAMING" C60
"Chemical Playground" 2 x C60 C90
"Dots on the Eyes" (C30)
"Atomic Roses" (C60) - Illusion Prod. 15 Rue Pierre-Curie
Mondouville 14120, France
"Promotion" (C60) From Ding Dong Disk Postbus 1155
"Apparition" (C30) 6901 bd
Arnhem, Holland 3rd Mind Tapes
"Kleine Krieger" 235 20 Spine ave
"Basilisk" 60 minute tape available thru White table, Kent, England
"The Curse" full length lp released on Inphase
"The Tower" full length lp released on the Dot's own
label, Inphase Records
"Face of the Fire" six song lp released on Inphase and
Play It Again, Sam, 150 rue de la Fosse, 1040 Brussels, Belgium
Legendary Pink Dots Address: Chez Dots
Top Floor, 737 Eastern Ave, Ilford, Essex, England.

JOEL H. 550 COLLEGE AVENUE BOULDER, COLORADO 80302 USA

This is an invitation to submit material for a compilation of 120 tapes to be released in the fall of 1984. The theme of the project is "Tables Turned". We plan to distribute the tapes through a network of distributors. We will send you a copy of the tape when it is completed. Please send us your tracks as you like. We will notify you concerning which tracks we have chosen. We will send you a copy of the tape when it is completed. Please send us your tracks as you like. We will notify you concerning which tracks we have chosen. We will send you a copy of the tape when it is completed. Please send us your tracks as you like. We will notify you concerning which tracks we have chosen.

TABLE I. "CONTEMPORARY" SPIRITUAL EPOCHS			
INDIAN (1900-1950)	CLASSICAL (1900-1950)	MODERN (1950-1980)	POSTMODERN (1980-1990)
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Architects office was formed in the spring of 1983 as a project to produce some music for the international music network. The impetus for the continued workings of the group was the profusion of serious music that was being made public at that time. With a tape salvaged from a dance concert that was never used and the discovery of the musical qualities of the plant communicator several pieces were created. Experiments with taped conversations were performed with some success, particularly as they involved multilingual exchange. The nature of the instruments and spoken material lent themselves well to improvisation, and pieces were made in rapid succession. Immediately following these pieces a new direction was taken toward through composed music. This was made possible by arranging many different tapes in sequence. At the same time the aleatoric properties were maintained by concurrently improvising and using sequences accidentally loaded into electronic instruments. These themes were often used in more traditional composing techniques including fuge work, variation, development and recapitulation. Out of this process the first symphyogenesis pieces were developed. The term refers to the assemblage of previously separate parts into a harmonious whole. The results of this work appear on our first product "ao 1983". As problems developed among the personnel the group turned inward for taped material. Whereas the first symphyogenesis used taped pieces that represented 12 years of collected fragments, the second used almost exclusively tapes of banter and arguments. In this way the music could interact with contemporary situations, and thus the therapeutic potential of music was realized. The principle of rearrangement later became the focus of the symphyogenesis, as is the case with the symgen. no. 3. This period described above constituted the zenith of home studio manipulation for architects office. The inevitable result of this outpouring of material was saturation. The fortunate result of the saturation was the discovery of expandable music, which was of great use for the purpose of producing soundtrack material for the lengthy motion pictures that are another product of the group which have lives of their own. The next challenge that faced the group was live performance. For the first performance rehearsals were done, the only ones that we ever did. The result of the first performance was a set of new pieces, and a set of versions of our earliest pieces. Some of these appear on our second product "partitions". Other performances happened in rapid succession, often with less than 24 hours notice. The first of these was a performance at a christmas fair for which we prepared shopping mall music. During an improvised section of this performance our most successful piece "hyanosis" was discovered. Since that time several other pieces have appeared in the same way. The process has been to formalize structure and elements of the pieces, and then to make departures from those again. This performance and the one that followed were convened at a former woolco location of tremendous size. The second performance there we formed three choirs located in triangular opposition to one another. By abstracting and reconfiguring sections of the performance the symgen. no. 3 was produced, which appears on our third product "dispensation". During the next period an association with the tabla and esraj master Bunji. A slight convergence with new age music can be detected in some of the pieces realized with Bunji. Through his influences new elements were introduced into the music, including new mix techniques, mouth percussion and the fission concept. Following this development architects office emerged on the local public radio broadcasts. This coincided with a second period of performances. These featured the introduction of Claude Martz, an alsatian bass clarinet player into the group, as well as Idana on additional keyboards, and the public premiere of Trevor, architects office's 2 year old lead singer. These events at a local bookstore and community arts center were well documented and served to establish a following. With this formidable assemblage of music the group moved into a period of network communication seeking international distribution and collective projects. Invitations to international taped music: compilations and distribution arrangements were the result. These were received from Belgium, Spain and various parts of the U.S. Currently the group is working on preparing a C-60 for Flowmotion to be distributed out of Leeds in north central England. More currently the group has done some daytime park performance, and done some playing in Denver. An association with filmmaker Stan Brackage has served to give architects office additional exposure through his network, as well as providing us with some enlightened criticism. Out of this most recent activity period the "Memorial Issue" was produced, in addition to a pair of video productions.



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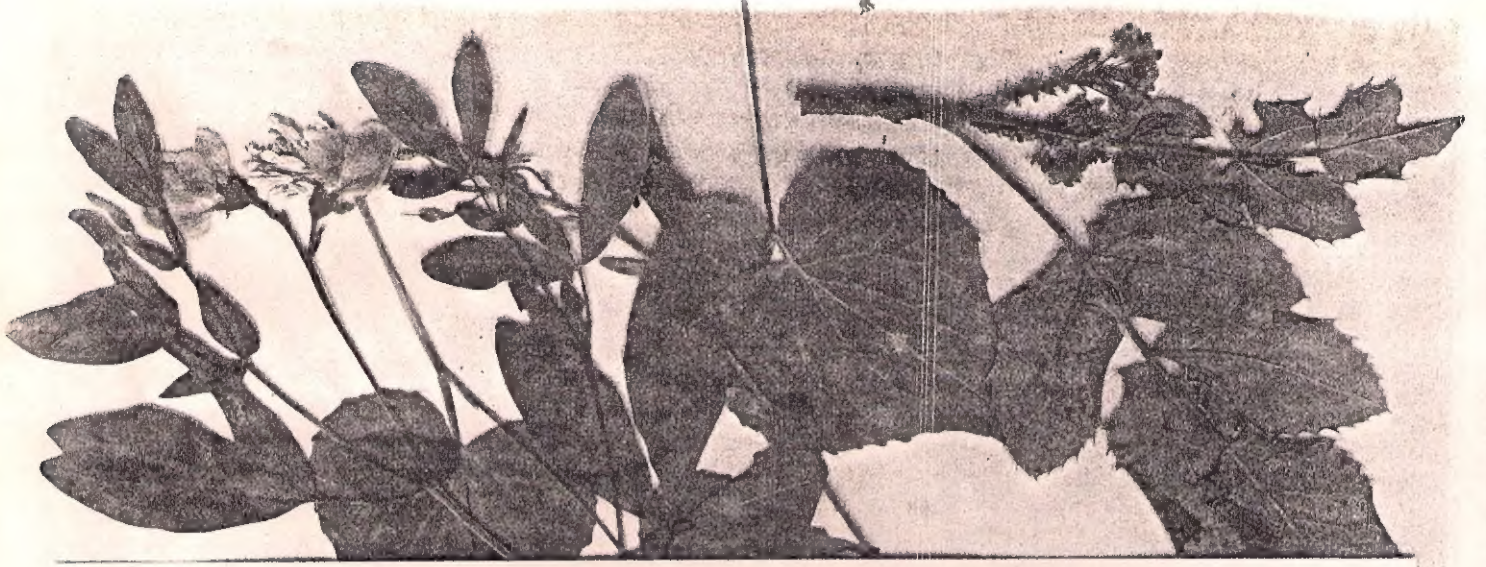
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THE UNDERGROUND CASSETTE SCENE IN AMERICA

by DAVID LICHTENBERG

I'm doing my radio show when the phone rings.
"Hello, KGNU..."
"Hi. How did you find out about all this music?"
Great! Someone out there who's interested in learning more about the underground music scene! This is what my radio show's all about!
"Well," I tell the caller, "I can give you a few addresses you can write to so you can get this music for yourself."
"No, where did YOU find out about all this music?"
"By contacting these addresses. Ya got a pencil and paper?"
"I mean, how did you FIND OUT about all this stuff?"
"Well...I wanted to. Do you?"
"Yeah, but HOW..."
Christ! It was just a rhetorical question. The book didn't give a shit about learning anything useful. He just wanted to be amazed. I should have told him I was some kind of professor and made fifty thou a year researching this stuff. But actually it's not so tough--if you're interested! Are YOU? Great! Lemme get you some addresses...Well, we got time for that. Though perhaps this article should be nothing BUT addresses so you can find it all out for yourself. The most useful places to begin at are magazines. *OP Magazine*, the soon-to-be-defunct product of the Lost Music Network, has one of the biggest listings of cassettes you can find anywhere, and most of these cassettes are by do-it-yourselfers (DIY's, for short) who throw their cassettes wildly at a CP in the hope of being mentioned in Graham Ingold's column, *Cassanote*. Graham apparently gets bombarded by cassettes and has unfortunately taken a cynical attitude towards his column, acting disgusted with all the music he has to listen to and rarely saying anything useful or interesting about the music. But as a listing of what's out there, it can't be beat! And now Mykel Board is helping out with a cassette article of his own. But hurry, there's only two more issues of *OP* left before it either dies or metamorphoses. *Unsound* is another great magazine that will give bona-fide reviews to independent music makers who send in their material. Their reviews are usually more informative than *OP*'s, but like all reviews they suffer for the inevitable fact that a review is only one human's opinion. To actually hear this stuff before you buy it requires the good fortune to be able to pick up a radio station that actually plays it. But even the stations (usually public) that play non-commercial alternatives usually concentrate on the more accepted indie labels, such as Ralph, Rough Trade, Subterranean, etc. Of course, records help. Cassettes are such a pain for DJ's that many avoid them altogether. But those of you in or near Boulder can hear plenty of indie cassettes on Under The Floorboards, aired at one A.M. Saturday nights on KGNU, Boulder--89.5 FM. I play plenty of this shit--maybe too much!
Well, who are these DIYers and what do they expect to get out of it? Okay, let's delve into a bit of history. Perhaps the original homotape (and perhaps not) is R. Stevie Moore. Starting back in 1968, Stevie has made a hundred cassettes that are still available today, the earliest of which contain a good bit of goofing off. Recently, however, he has released records both in France and domestically which serve as overviews of his "best" material and which seem to me to constitute a major push to hit the big time. We can only hope that after all these years of obscurity that he finally achieves as much success as he deserves--but not enough to make us sick of him!
Others seem to have goals other than fame and fortune. Richard Sorrentino charges nothing for his tapes of sophisticated synthesizer music saying that making music that's intelligible to another person is

an accomplishment enough. Mathew Somerville only charges a buck and is mostly interested in the popularization of music utilizing environmental sounds (of an urban environment, that is). Peter Catham charges a whole \$3.50 for tapes with quite extravagant packaging (and interesting music). Boy Dirt Car sent me an extra tape recorded on the day they received my check in the mail (you can get one, too!), and they encourage everyone to go out and record whatever you want in order to cure us of the illness of rock/pop as important cultural artifact. Another cassette I have was made illegally in Poland! As well as making their own music with the Payconas, Brian Ladd and Julie Frith put together sampler cassettes of friends near and far and also a magazine of reviews and art, both under the name of *Object*. Amazing what some people have the time and energy for even after working for a living, huh?
Speaking of time and energy (love that transition, eh), how DO these folks DO it? Well, I know Mathew Somerville records in his bedroom. Here at Walls Of Genius, we use the living room for our frenzied party jams, but for quieter pieces we sometimes move the mikes into the kitchen to get away from the traffic noise! Architects Office benefit from their friends at Redux Records who provide high quality recording in a genuine "home" studio, surrounded dangerously by fraternities and other college-types.

And finally, what kind of *avap* music is on these tapes? Well, there's punk and thrash, sure, but there's a plenty of high-tech electronics, too. And even a bit of silliness here and there, the kind that makes establishment high-brows gnash their teeth. But probably the most common form is that which can loosely be described as industrial/environmental/sound collage...NOISE! It's happening all over the world--even in your backyard!

All right then, now let's get down to business. (Is he serious?) There's a heckuva lot more money going into the production of DIY cassettes nowadays than there is going into the support of them. The luckiest DIYers break even (like the Victory Tour, he-ho). Some DIYers even entertain delirious hopes of being a third as big as The Residents someday! A lucky break for some is too find a valuable distributor such as AEON, who has built up a reputation for carrying nothing but the most unusual and the best--AND for paying their contributing musicians, an all too rare trait in the current world of indie cassette distribution. But despite the difficulties, DIY music lives on...because it's what these people live for! Now that may not be much, but it's better than heroin. Here are the addresses:

AEON 604 PRINCETON FORT COLLINS, CO. 80525	OP/LOST MUSIC NETWORK P.O. BOX 3341 OLYMPIA, WA 98507	UNBOUND 801 22nd ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107
WALLS OF GENIUS P.O. BOX 1093 BOULDER, CO. 80306	LADD/FRITH P.O. BOX 967 EUREKA, CA. 95502	REDUX RECORDS 1100 10th ST. BOULDER, CO 80302
RICHARD SORRENTINO 637 CAMPBELL AVE. LONG BRANCH, N.J. 07740	ARCHITECTS OFFICE 550 COLLEGE AVE BOULDER, CO 80302	MATHEW SOMERVILLE SAFEHOUSE TAPES 1455 FILLMORE ST. #1 DENVER, CO 80206
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		SOCKS TO ALL THAT WERE LEFT OUT!

DAVID LICHTENBERG
P.O. BOX 1076
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CON 444-4285